

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PHNOM 13960 141331Z

44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 OMB-01

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R 141140Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4185

INFO CJCS

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 13960

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB

SUBJECT: STATUS OF CONSCRIPTION/RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

1. SUMMARY. THE NUMBER OF NEW RECRUITS INCREASED MARKEDLY OVER THE PAST 3 DAYS WITH A DAILY AVERAGE OF 154 AS COMPARED TO 42 FOR THE PREVIOUS WEEK. EFFORTS TO GET CONSCRIPTION MOVING IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN HALF-HEARTED AT BEST, PRODUCING ONLY 68 RECRUITS IN THE FIRST WEEK OF OPERATIONS. THE NATIONAL RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE HAS ADOPTED AND THE PRESIDENT HAS ENDORSED A SET OF NEW MEASURES TO SPEED UP CONSCRIPTION BOTH IN PHNOM PENH AND THE PROVINCES. END SUMMARY.

2. BY CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON DECEMBER 13 THE FANK RECEPTION CENTER HAD RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 11,253 NEW RECRUITS (9924 VOLUNTEERS AND 1329 CONSCRIPTS). JXSULTS FOR NOVEMBER 11, 12, AND 13 WERE 191, 145, AND 126 RESPECTIVELY. THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PREVIOUS 7 DAYS, WHEN AN AVERAGE OF 42 RECRUITS PER DAY WERE PRODUCED, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PHNOM 13960 141331Z

BUT STILL FALLS SHORT OF THE DAILY GOAL OF 200 FOR

PHNOM PENH AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

3. EMBASSY OFFICERS WHO SPOKE WITH SEVERAL KHAND AND PHNOM PENH CITY OFFICIALS TODAY FOUND THEM UNABLE TO EXPLAIN THE INCREASED NUMBER OF RECRUITS. ALL BUT ONE SAID THAT NO SPECIAL EFFORT TO IMPROVE CONSCRIPTION RESULTS HAS YET BEEN UNDERTAKEN. THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CITY, HOWEVER, ATTRIBUTED THE IMPROVEMENT OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS TO THE RECENTLY COMPLETED ELECTIONS OF 10 AND 50 HOUSE UNIT CHIEFS. THE NEWLY ELECTED CHIEFS ARE MORE DYNAMIC AND THUS MORE EFFECTIVE IN CONSCRIPTION/RECRUITMENT EFFORTS, HE FEELS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE NOTED THAT THE POLICE AND NATIONAL GENDARMERIE HAVE NOT BEGUN TO SERIOUSLY SEEK OUT DRAFT EVADERS BECAUSE OF FEAR THAT TO DO SO MIGHT AGGRAVATE THE CURRENT STUDENT-TEACHER UNREST.

4. MISSION OFFICERS VISITING BATTAMBANG EARLY THIS WEEK FOUND THE CONSCRIPTION PROGRAM THERE MARKED BY TORPOR AND CONFUSION. ALTHOUGH THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR ESTIMATED THAT THE PROVINCE HAS A POOL OF 15,000 ELIGIBLE MALES AMONG ITS 800,000 POPULATION, THE TARGET FOR THE PROVINCE HAD BEEN SET AT APPROXIMATELY 3,000 AND THE QUOTA FOR BATTAMBANG CITY AT ONLY 566 MEN. THE PROVINCE'S REVIEW BOARD WAS SET UP IN MAY BUT ONLY BEGAN OPERATING ON DECEMBER 5 WHEN THE PROVINCE BELATEDLY OPENED ITS CONSCRIPTION/RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN. DURING ITS FIRST WEEK THE BOARD PRODUCED ONLY 53 DRAFTEES FROM THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AND 15 FROM AN OUTLYING DISTRICT. NO RECRUITMENT CENTER HAD BEEN PLANNED. JUST BEFORE THE MISSION OFFICERS' DEPARTURE, HOWEVER, PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS ANNOUNCED THAT A BUILDING TO SERVE AS A RECEPTION CENTER HAD BEEN CHOSEN AND THAT ALL CITY, PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT LEADERS HAD BEEN SUMMONED FOR A DECEMBER 13 MEETING ON CONSCRIPTION.

5. A POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME SITUATION DEVELOPED AT REAM TRAINING CENTER AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK WHEN SEVERAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PHNOM 13960 141331Z

HUNDRED TRAINEES WENT ON STRIKE TO PROTEST ALLEGED CRUEL TREATMENT BY INSTRUCTORS. BY THE END OF THE WEEK, THE SITUATION REMAINED UNCLEAR BUT HIGH LEVEL EFFORTS WERE UNDERWAY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM.

6. NATIONAL RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE CHIEF OF STAFF MG THAPPANA NGINN, PHNOM PENH GOVERNOR UN TRAMUCH AND NATIONAL GENDARMERIE COMMANDER HEM SAVETH BRIEFED

CHMEDTC AND POLMIL COUNSELOR ON DECEMBER 12 ON NEW MEASURES APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE TO INCREASE ACCESSIONS IN PHNOM PENH AND THE PROVINCES. A NEW DECREE IS BEING DRAFTED TO REDUCE CAUSES FOR DEFERMENTS AND LIMIT CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT TO MEN HAVING COMPLETED MILITARY SERVICE. REVIEW COMMITTEES ARE BEING BROKEN UP AND ASSIGNED TO DIFFERENT KHANDS IN ORDER TO REDUCE COLLUSION IN GRANTING DEFERMENTS. EACH KHAND CHIEF IS BEING CALLED IN FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON MEANS TO PICK UP DRAFT EVADERS. A TEAM WILL BE SENT TO BATTAMBANG EARLY NEXT WEEK TO HELP SET UP A RECEPTION CENTER AND INSTRUCT GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS ON REGISTRATION AND REVIEW BOARD PROCEDURES.

7. CHARGE, CHMEDTC, AND POL-MIL COUNSELOR DISCUSSED MOST OF THESE MEASURES WITH PRESIDENT LON NOLAND PRINCIPALS OF THE RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE ON DECEMBER 13. LON NOL GAVE HIS BLESSING TO THE IDEA OF A NEW DECREE (WHICH, HOWEVER, IS TO BE SIGNED BY THE NEW PRIME MINISTER) AND AGREED THAT CONSCRIPTION FOR GENERAL RESERVE UNITS IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA AS WELL AS MR-3 SHOULD BE PRESSED IN BATTAMBANG AND PURSAT PROVINCES. HE ALSO INDICATED AGREEMENT AS TO THE NEED FOR MORE FORCEFUL MEASURES TO PREVENT DRAFT EVASION AND FOR CLOSER SUPERVISION OF TRAINING CENTERS.

ENDERS

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